

## Changing Tastes

**As our table selections become healthier, so do our birds' diets.**

*By Marguerite Floyd*

When I was growing up (back in the Dark Ages), soda was allowed only on special occasions. Our family's idea of a snack was an apple or an orange, and junk food consisted of french fries from a restaurant. When I had my first bird (a little budgie named Kim) he received only seeds, and sometimes, a little bit of salted cracker sneaked in by my dad.

Things sure have changed since then! A few years ago I had no qualms about gulping a bottle of soda to wash down a bag of Cheetos — or Twinkies, Cheese Whiz or good ol' fried bologna with Miracle Whip on soft white bread — just because they tasted good.

All good things, as they say, must come to an end. Now I tend to choose bottled water or iced tea over cola. I eat more salads, drink organic milk and eat fresh veggies and fruits from the local farmers' co-op when possible. Lately, I develop gastrointestinal distress if I even look at a box of Hamburger Helper. Although I'm getting reacquainted with apples and bananas, I still can't abide by tofu. I have finally figured out the difference between 100-percent whole-wheat bread and plain wheat bread. With close friends I'll even discuss good fiber sources.

This slow return to the healthy diet of my childhood also benefits my birds. I must confess, however, that my birds' diets influence my diet choices far more than mine influence their food items. Sure, my birds would prefer to bury themselves in a canister of artificial cheddar-flavored popcorn or drink Extra Sweet Super Happy Grape Surprise in a bottle, but I don't give them that opportunity. Because they aren't allowed caffeine, alcohol, chocolate or avocado, I stay away from these items, too. Who can handle those begging eyes and pitiful chirps without feeling guilty? It's easier to cook one meal rather than two, so when piling up on the veggies and whole grains for my birds, I do the same.

**\*\*For the full article, pick up the December issue of BIRD TALK\*\***

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